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AUTHOR Tohidi, Nayereh
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ABSTRACT

During the Iranian Revolution of 1979, millions of Iranian women left their homes and entered the public sphere, but their public presence was soon restricted with the ascension to power of the Ayatollah Khomeini. For Westerners the Iranian women's seemingly easy acceptance of the forced wearing of the veil (chador) appeared to be their ultimate concession to repression. But the acceptance of the veil was considered a minor concession as the women focused on the greater task of disposing the Shah. In addition to the law requiring the "hejab" (complete covering of a woman), other religious-based laws that discriminated against women were reinstated. The continued support of Khomeini and Islamic traditionalism by women must be seen in the context of the past and the social classes and social contexts of Iran today. The Westernization of Iran encouraged under the Shah challenged the middle class and peasant women's traditional lifestyle, religious beliefs, and cultural identity while it failed to meet their needs. These women eagerly embraced the traditional practices. Westerners are reminded that religious fundamentalism and the suppression of women occur in many nations undergoing revolution. An 11-item bibliography is included. (DJC)

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WOMEN AND REVOLUTION IN IRAN

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

by

Nayereh Tohidi, Ph.D.

Women Studies Program
California State University

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WOMEN AND REVOLUTION IN IRAN
Lessons To Be Learned *

Nayereh Tohidi

During the Iranian Revolution of 1979, foreign television media captured much of the intensity and outrage against the Shah. But their cameras focused mostly on men and failed to show the equally impressive massive participation by Iranian women in this political and revolutionary struggle.

Millions of Iranian women boldly stepped out from behind the four walls of their homes into the public sphere. Their involvement took many forms. Some collected and disseminated news or distributed leaflets. Others gave shelter to the wounded or demonstrators under attack. Many actively marched and demonstrated in the streets. Some even went so far as to help erect barricades against the police. A few took up arms and dared to go underground as members of guerrilla movements.

During the early months of 1979, several women activists, particularly the well-educated ones, while opposing the Shah as the symbol of tyranny, gradually grew suspicious as they realized that most of the women who demonstrated wore veils.

This anxiety increased as Khomeini took over the leadership of the Revolution and as streets filled with the repetitive cries for "Islamic Rule!" and "God's Party is the only Party!"

Nevertheless, like many of their male friends, these women dismissed the idea assuming that Khomeini was only playing a spiritual role. Clerical rule, they thought, was incompatible with Iran's developing capitalist system. The dynamic process so inherent in the Revolution would eventually expose and eliminate the retrogressive and reactionary factions from leadership. Or so they thought.

And so they ignored the ominous symbol of the veil, perceiving that it was an irrelevant remnant of the past. They were convinced that it would be set aside as women attempted, during the course of the Revolution to demand their rights that would lead to their eventual emancipation.

Amidst the exhileration at the Shah's defeat, the organization of several women's groups provided one more encouraging sign. For the first time in many of their lives, after years of repression in the country, women were organizing themselves. And as March 8, 1979, approached--International Women's Day (IWD) the women worked hard to mobilize thousands of Iranian women to commemorate the event.

The heady days of optimism and mass euphoria, however, did not last long. Two days before the event was to take place, Khomeini announced restrictive measures against women. His ultimatums enraged the women. Instead of causing them to abandon their plans to rally, it resulted in an outburst of spontaneous militant demonstrations.

Women vented their outrage that the veil was once again becoming compulsory apparel and that the government could dare try to eliminate women who had qualified to serve as judges in the courts. Women refused to accept the repeal of the Family Protection Law of 1975 which restricted polygyny and men's unilateral right to divorce and to the custody of children. Instead of the planned one day rally, the storm raged for nearly a week. It would become the first and most open confrontation that Iranian women were ever able to make against the fundamentalist rulers.

Though the government cautiously restrained themselves from immediately imposing these new measures; in reality, the forward march of the popular movement, was for all practical purposes brought to a grinding halt. The quest for social justice, democracy and independence had to be unwillingly abandoned, including the women's efforts. The Iranian Revolution therefore, was coercively aborted.

Women, members of national ethnic minorities, popular and progressive organizations, workers and newly formed labor councils, intellectuals, journalists, publishers...one by one, all became victims of the waves of terror imposed by a theocracy that showed itself to be more and more regressive.

Of all these groups that actively participated in the Revolution, the Iranian women's role is, perhaps, the least understood and most enigmatic.

How could Western feminists understand the sudden outburst of millions of "Third World" women upon the scene of social struggle who were not demanding "Equal Rights", "Free Abortion" and so on, but instead shouting "Down with the Shah", "Shah is a US Puppet", and "Islamic Rule!"?

Moreover, Western feminists who correctly perceived the veil as symbol of Muslim women's social isolation and seclusion couldn't help but wonder why Iranian women at the very time when they were opposing the repression and dictatorship were themselves cloaked with the veil.

Many Iranian activists at the time, both men and women, considered the veil as a part of the superstructure or a secondary phenomenon which bothered only Western feminists or some few Iranian women intellectuals. The immediate concern was to rid the country of the Shah's regime and his imperialist supporters.

Thus, as contradictory as it might seem, many women, even the non-religious, non-traditional and highly educated ones took up the veil as a symbol of solidarity and opposition to the Shah's regime (AZ, 1981).

At rallies and demonstrations, chadors (veils) and roosaries (large scarves) were extended to the unveiled women, who then felt obliged to accept to show their solidarity with the majority. At the time, the more educated and leftist considered it a minor concession for the sake of unity against

the common enemy.

These were the same women who would later feel compelled to take on a new dimension to their struggle--this time against Khomeini and his repressive and medieval theocracy. How regrettable that most of those who identified with the Left and other Democratic movements and those who were highly educated progressive in their thinking could not have perceived the hateful misogynist nature of the newly imposed religious law and the reactionary nature of the fundamentalists who had usurped the political power.

PRESENT STATUS OF IRANIAN WOMEN

Today, in spite of the massive participation that Iranian women took in the Revolution their degraded position has not been elevated. They experience the same subjugations as before--except in most cases, it has worsened. The official rights and duties of women along with the expected behavior patterns and sex roles that accompany them have progressed no further than during the oppressive Pahlavi rule. In many cases, the situation has worsened to the extent that it mirrors more the times of Iran's pre-capitalist days. Some might even describe them as medieval.

Here, some of the most blatant violations of women's rights by the Islamic regime will be mentioned:

1. Veil Made Compulsory.

Under the Civil Code currently practiced in Iran, all women, including non-Muslims and foreigners, are required to wear the veil and observe Islamic *Hejab* (complete covering of a woman). As

Khomeini has commanded, "no part of a woman's body may be seen except her face and the part of her hand between the wrist to the tip of her fingers". Appearing without Hejab is considered a crime punishable by 75 lashes or by to a year's imprisonement. Bands of club-wielders, employed by the "Center to Fight the Undesired", impose Hejab upon women. The slogans such as "Death to those without Hejab" have covered walls in cities inciting action against unveiled women(1).

As the political and economic problems of the Islamic Republic have intensified, pressures on women to adhere to conservative Islamic standards have also increased (Higgins, 1985). The Islamic Regime's obsession with Hejab, needs an indepth analysis of its own in a separate article.

2. Women Segregated in Public Institutions.

Many public areas have become sexually segregating, including some modes of public transportations, schools, and universities. This has often resulted in segregation between teachers and students. Many girl's schools have had to close because of the shortage of women teachers. Since the Revolution, women students have decreased 32 percent and women teachers, 35 percent.

The illiteracy rate among women, particularly in rural areas, has been increasing even above the former tragic level. In higher education, women are banned from entering certain fields of studies - specifically, law, agriculture, geology, archeology, and mining engineering.

3. Marriage Age Lowered.

When Khomeini first came to power, he lowered the minimum legal age for girls to marry from 18 to 13. Then later, it was again lowered to age nine. (Note that married women are prohibited from attend-

ing public school.)

4. Polygyny Reinstated.

Polygyny, previously restricted by the Family Protection Law, has been reinstated. A man can have up to four wives officially, as well as others on a temporary basis (*sigh'a* or *Mut'a*).

Under the *Shari'a*, (Islamic Code of Ethics), as interpreted by Iranian *Shi'a* clergy, temporary marriage can be contracted for a fixed period of time - ranging from a few hours to ninety nine years, after a nominal fee is paid to the woman and a verse is repeated. This type of marriage takes place for the sole purpose of man's sexual pleasure (Haeri, 1983). By renewing legitimacy and official encouragement of *Mut'a*, the Islamic regime has, in reality, endorced a form of prostitution.

5. Divorce and Child Custody Reinstated as Unilateral Rights of Men.

Except in extremely unusual circumstances, women cannot seek a divorce and a divorced woman loses the right of custody of her children to their father after the age of 7 for girls and 2 for boys. Women do not have the right of guardianship over their children during marriage, after divorce, and even after the death of their husbands.

6. Husbands' Permission Required.

A woman is not allowed to leave the house without her husband's permission, and she must get written permission before traveling abroad.

7. Employment of Women Restricted.

Besides have to get her husband's written permission before taking a job, women have been officially discouraged from gaining employment outside the home and forced back into the "domestic sphere".

Either they are fired under the pretense of failure to observe Islamic *Hejab* or are laid off or made to retire early.

According to a recent bill passed by the Islamic Parliament, full-time women employees will be restricted to part-time. The government has announced that "in order to promote motherhood and family life, the salary of any male employee will be raised 40% if his wife quits her job."

8. Abortion Made Illegal.

In 1978, to make concessions to the religious opposition, abortion was made illegal.

9. Day Care Centers Closed Down.

The few formerly existing public nurseries have been closed down.

10. Women Valued Half that of Men.

According to the Law of Retribution (*Qasas*)[2] passed in 1982, the value of a woman's life is only half that of a man's. The testimony of two women equals that of one man's. In the case of major crimes such as murder, a woman's testimony is not considered at all. A woman's inheritance is only half of a man's.

11. Sexual "Offences" Punished by Death.

Women convicted of adultery are stoned to death. Acts of homosexuality are also punishable by death if the "offense" is repeated.

12. Women Abused Sexully.

Thousands of women have been imprisoned for their political beliefs and have subsequently been tortured, raped, and been executed.

According to Islam, a virgin will go to heaven if she dies. Therefore the regime does not execute virgins until they have arrang-

ed a temporary marriage in prison and the girl has been raped.

13. Women Unrelentlessly Victimized by War.

The continuing genocidal war between Iran-Iraq has further compounded the effects of economic deterioration, high unemployment, high rate of inflation, brain drain, and exodus of professionals from the country. The increasing number of widows, displaced and refugee women, are undergoing unbearable economic hardship and emotional suffering.

WHY DID WOMEN RALLY BEHIND KHOMEINI?

Considering how so many Iranian women wholeheartedly endorsed and involved themselves in the Revolution, how can one explain their present tragic fate? Why haven't they continued their vehement protests against the Islamic government's imposition of the hated veil and other oppressive measures? Do all the social strata of women perceive their present situation as devastating and deteriorating as professional middle class do? What about those groups of women who are still supporting the Islamic Republic of Khomeini?

The post-revolutionary changes that have effected women negatively can be overemphasized if they are not seen in the context of past and present laws and "if class differences and the social context are ignored." (Higgins, 1985, P. 483).

The historical, socio-economic, political, cultural and psychological factors behind Iran's Revolution all must be considered in any analysis of the women's plight. To address all these aspects is beyond the scope of this article, but a few brief comments should be made:

1. In Iran, like most other "Third World" countries, women's issues and movements have been related to the national anti-colonial,

anti-imperialist movement. Consequently, the fate of the women's movement and their social status have been closely intertwined with the general course of the national revolution and class struggle.

The historical precedent and social tradition for the massive participation of women in the Iranian Revolution of 1977-79 go back to the 1905-1911 Constitutional Movement. Never managing to overthrow feudalism and colonial domination, this movement could not succeed in implementing its bourgeois-democratic goals for women.

However, the seeds had been planted for future struggle and consciousness raising. (3)

2. Iran, under the Pahlavi reign (1922-1979) through neo-colonialist penetration, was changing rapidly from a semi-feudal Asiatic society to a centralized capitalist state dependent mainly on the United States. However, the uneven and deformed process of capitalist development and the restricted character of industrialization, along with an absolutist and corrupt monarchy, tended to reinforce the persistance of the pre-capitalist mode of production to a considerable extent (Jazani, 1980). This in turn, kept on reproducing backward and traditional social relationships, values, attitudes, and behavior patterns, including those related to gender roles.

3. While the process of modernization, i.e., capitalist development and Westernization was advantageous to an important sector of the upper class and the newly emerging middle class, it was often harmful to the traditional segment of the middle class, i.e., the merchant (bazaar) bourgeoisie and petite bourgeoisie, as well as their histrocial ally, i.e,, the clergy. Bazaar merchants and artisans often suffered the ruinous competition from Western goods, and later on, from larger commercial and industrial enterprises of

their own Westerized upper class. Therefore, a process of conflict and friction had been set in motion between the growing "modernized" social strata who imitated and aspired to a Western lifestyle, and the powerful clergy and traditional bazaaries who perceived the cultural and economic changes as jeopardizing their very existence.

4. It was the women who belonged to these latter strata, i.e., (traders, merchants, shopkeepers, artisans) whose lifestyle, religious beliefs, and cultural identity was being challenged, negated, ridiculed, and sometimes coersively taken away by the Westernization process of the Shah's state. (4)

The younger generation of these women in the 1970's were caught up in the midst of two conflicting and competing value systems - the traditional one reinforcing their families and the religious standards of public morality, and the more modern one, aligning them with a Westernized imported culture reinforced by the State. To resolve this dilemma, they fell back on their "traditional roots", fascinated by the Islamic model of womanhood presented by idealogues such as Ali Shariati or even the more conservative fundamentalists opposing the Shah. And it was they, who later on, made up the core of veiled militant contingents who demonstrated in the streets.

The rapid changes imposed by the Shah did not serve the needs of the majority of women. The emergence of a new market which could attract cheap female labor was just on inevitable process of capitalist development, industrialization, and land reform in Iran. Due to the restricted character of industrialization and proletarization, however, women could, for the most part, be absorbed by the growing sector of services and state employment.

In the 1970's, the number of literate, highly educated and

"economically active" women in urban centers increased, but no genuine change, nor fundamental progress really took place in the social status and everyday life of the majority of Iranian Women. A few reforms pertaining to the legal rights of women, e.g., Family Protection Law of 1975, while positive and progressive on paper, did not effect the majority of women in reality.

For example, peasant women did not really benefit from the Shah's land reform (Tabari, 1982). As is the case in many "Third World" countries, development is directed and manipulated by multi-national corporations and results in a sharp deterioration in women's daily lives, intensifying their exploitation and the degraded status.

Nevertheless, the very act of leaving behind the old traditions and participating in social production in the public sphere was a step forward for urban working women. But the lack of corresponding supportive social provisions, and effective legal reforms, made working outside the home a perpetual struggle.

Women were subject to continual exploitation. Besides receiving low wages, they were exposed to constant sexual harrassment in the workplace, and discouraged by resentful negative attitudes from relatives and family members at home.

The model for the "new woman" proposed by the Shah's regime, did not appeal to most Iranians.

According to traditional norms, a woman had to hide her body in public and submit herself like an obedient servant or piece of property, first to her father and later to her husband.

The "modern woman", on the other hand, was expected to ornament and show herself in order to please both the public and her husband while at the same time serve as a cheap commo dity in the labor force (AZ, 1981).

The constant exposure of women to the decadent aspects of Western culture; the deliberate efforts made to cultivate a mass consumption consciousness--slavish imitation of European fashions, preoccupation with self-presentation, and,in short, commercialization of women all created an "alien" and confused model of womanhood hardly preferable to the traditional one. The resultant dual value system with its constant dilemma and alienation among women, manifested itself in the formation of two distinct groups within them. The one, made up of the more highly educated and working women, modified their traditional attitues and adapted to the new environment.

The other, often under pressure from their families, resisted the "imposed, alien, corrupt and non-Islamic" standards and embraced the traditional forms. It's no wonder that this group, made up of members of the bazaar merchants and traditional petite bourgeoisie, soon felt excluded, isolated and put down by the Western dominant culture. This, in turn, resulted in resentment, distrust, and hidden hostility towards the unveiled "modern" women.(5)

Alternative models for women were reintroducted by the leaders and idealoques of the Islamic opposition, such as Ali Shariati, Taleghani and Motahari(6). Fatimeh, the daughter of Prophet Mohammad and the wife of Ali, the First Imam, became the personification of virtue and obedience. Zeinab, sister of Hossein, the Third Imam, who was martyred by the corrupt rulers of the day, became the symbol of outspokenness, aggressive and militant women. These models which were reintroduced in deliberately modified political portraits, provided women with an identity and a much needed defense mechanism.

In such a situation, and given the factors enumerated above, the clergy found a climate ripe for channelling the genuine grievances of women into a puritannical Islamic movement.

Some other socio-political factors also contributed to how Iranians embraced Islam as the alternative to the Shah:

A history of failure of nationalist and communist forces in Iran and the subsequent distrust and disillusionment combined with the Shah's systematic and ruthless repression of the newly formed democratic and leftist organizations created a vacuum of progressive alternatives for the anti-Shah movement.

Unlike Islamic groups, the left lacked a national network to communicate effectively with the masses. They were further in disadvantage because of being unable to apply a vocabulary more familiar to the populance. As a result the progressive ideas did not find an appropriate place in the society. The leftist forces were under constant suppression and, thus, could only offer the image of an underground guerrilla woman (such as that of Ashraf Dehghani and Marzieh Oskooei, two well known Fedaee). Such a model of course, could not be adopted by the majority of women. Furthermore, the left mostly relied on an economic deterministic analysis of the Iranian society and this limited its perspective of the women's question. Issues such as women's rights and more general democratic and cultural evaluation of the Iranian Society require a through analysis which the left ignored to learn (Azari, 1983).

Moreover, illiteracy (65 percent) and political naivete prevailed especially among women. Historically, women had no outside public associations except with the mosques. Nor were there any popular women's groups yet truly organized to raise feminist consciousness.

It is in such a social context that Islam and other religions become a vent for protest. Fundamentalists in countries like Iran, Egypt, Lebanon, Moracco, Pakistan, etc., gain control by channelizing people's frustration and anger.

CONCLUSION

Lessons to Be Learned:

1. To understand the motives and roles of Iranian women in the Revolution and to assess their gains and/or losses since the inception of the Islamic government, one has to take the historical and social context as well as class differences into consideration.

It is obvious that the changes and policies implimented by the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) have had, generally, a negative and retrogressive impact on the material and cultural conditions of the majority of the population, both female and male. But, while the IRI has restricted the rights and opportunities of women in most aspects, there is still a group of women (supportive of the Islamic regime) who, because of their class standing and socio-cultural background, have gained certain privileges, as well as a positive self-concept, a sense of power, dignity and pride (Higgins, 1985). Although their role in community politics has remained indirect, protected, and secondary to that of men's, they have managed to retain their subsequently gained activism in the public sphere (Hegland, 1986). However, as far as women's movement and feminism is concerned, the activism, idealogy, and point of view of this group of Iranian women resembles that of Phyllis Schlafly in the United States, except that she does not wear a veil!

It is important to note that, in many respects, the Islamic government has not been able to succeed in implimentation of its idealogical objectives. Because some of the medieval pre-industrial and patriarchal demands of the Islamic clergy are, inevitably, in contradiction with the structural imperatives of the Iranian capitalistic economy. Economic necessities, for example, force many

women into low-paid jobs in the formal and (whenever possible) informal sector and domestic wage labor. Some educated women with prior work experience have involved themselves in self-employment.

Iranian women's status in recent history, while low in comparison to many countries, has been among the higher ones for the Middle Eastern and Islamic standards. The contemporary Iranian women's social role, literacy level (35 percent), and participation rate of urban women in labor force (12 percent), and particularly, their recent massive political participation in the Revolution, have made it difficult for the present ruling clergy to radically transform women's socio-economic roles and return them all back to the domestic sphere.

Thus, the mere participation of women in public economic activities and any violation of Islamic code of Hejab on their part, have undermined the fundamentalist notion of women's role and have worked as a resistance to total subjection.

2. Islam should not be conceptualized as an autonomous, monolithic, and static structure that has shaped the socio-economic process and social relation, including women's status (Moghadam, 1983). Iran's present predicament, and that of Iranian women in particular, can not be explained by focusing only on the compulsory veil, the *Sharia* based restrictive legal rights, or the Islamic fundamentalism of the present regime. Prevailing conditions of women in Iran, are not the overnight invention of the Ayatollahs and their Islamic rules. Nor is it Islam that subjugates women any more than fundamentalist Catholicism does in Latin America. As Saadawi (1980) writes, "the great religions of the world uphold similar principles in so far as the submission of women to men is concerned".

Like many other Middle Eastern countries, the Iranian society

is characterized by the uneven development of capitalism and industrialization. Therefore, the persistence of the traditional orthodox school of Islam and its formidable laws and regulations in terms of sex role, correspond to the persistence of pre-capitalistic modes of production. The direct and indirect consequences of years of patriarchy, repression, dictatorial monarchy, cultural and economic penetration of imperialist forces, have all contributed to the present backlash in Iran.

3. Today, a new and very subtle factor has been added to the plight of Middle Eastern women, that is, the Islamic fundamentalist revival. This appearingly "anti imperialist", radical, militant trend has the potential for great deception as it continues to penentrate both women and men's minds and politics. This reactionary trend obscures and distorts the objectives and direction of the national and libertation movement. In order to cause the movement to be deviated and to divide people into religious factions and thus build a strong and subtle "barrier against communism", the local and international reaction have been indirectly and covertly reinforcing the pan-Islamic and fundamentalist revival in the Middle East. (Consider the role of fundamentalist forces such as *Amal*, *Aldaawa*, *Ekhvan al Muslemin* , and *Hezbollal* in Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt and Iran.)

As far as the women's movements in the Middle East are concerned, (specifically, Iran, Egypt, Pakistan, Lebanon and Palestine) there is an urgent need in terms of educating and organizing people to fight back and reverse the fundamentalist trend within the women's as well as the national liberation movements. The idealogical significance of Islam as a political alternative to which the masses have turned must be understood and appropriate measures must be

drawn up in response to it (Tabari and Yeqaneh, 1982).

A call for separation of the state from religion as a democratic principle should be included in any progressive platform of political groups faced with the threat of fundamentalism. Women should insist on holding out for this principle more than ever.

4. "Third World" women's movements and their people's national democratic and anti-imperialist struggles are closely interrelated theoretically and empirically (Chinchilla, 1977). Alone, women's movements can never transform the foundations of sexism and sexual oppression. Neither can a revolution which seeks to transform class relationships meet its goals if it does not incorporate the question of women's oppression. Specific demands of women must be incorporated into the national anti-imperialist movement and class struggle right from the beginning. The women's question should not be relegated to the days after the revolutions - as has been, unfortunately, the tendency of many left and revolutionary forces. Cases such as Algerian and Iranian Revolutions have proved that the success of a nationalist or even a socialist revolution does not automatically lead to liberation for women.

In the case of Middle Eastern women, in particular, because of the recent spread of religious fundamentalism, it is more important than ever to raise women's issues and integrate the women's question into the national and class struggle.

Therefore, mobilization of women in a democratic organization through the process of revolution must utilize the women's political power inside the revolution. Otherwise, "women may be used by the revolution as tools, as cheap labor, cheap figthers - to die first and be liberated last!" (Sadaawi, 1982).

FOOTNOTES

1. The newest method of reprisal against unveiled women has been recently formulated by Hashemi Rafsanjani, one of the most influential clergy who serves as speaker of the Islamic Parliament. In one of his recent Friday sermons (May 4,1986) broadcast by radio, T.V. and print media, Mr. Rafsanjani announced that those women who are still not in perfect compliance with the Islamic *Hejab* (categorized in Farsi as *"Bad Hejab"*, meaning those who are not covered properly,i.e., revealing some hair beneath their head-scarves and wearing bright colors), will be arrested and put in a concentration camp to undergo re-indoctrination and do forced labor. Unlike regular or political prisoners, their daily expenses must be paid by husbands or male kinsmen. For further details on this dreadful measure, see "Women & Struggle in Iran", No. 5, 1986.

2. To study this important part of Iran's penal system, see the text of the Bill of Retribution in "Women & Struggle in Iran, No. 3, 1984, P. 16-17.

3. For a comprehensive historical account of the Iranian Women's movement see Sanasarian (1982), and "Women & Struggle in Iran", 1985, No. 4, P. 6-15.

4. An example of this was when women were forced to remove their veils in 1935 under Reza Shah (the late deposed Shah's father). This measure was designed to help "modernize" Iran. To enforce the idea, police were ordered to physically remove the veil from any woman wearing it in public.

Undoubtedly, this would have been a progressive step if women had been able to choose to do this themselves. Instead, it humiliated and alienated many of the Iranian women, who resorted to staying behind closed doors and not venturing into the streets in order to avoid this embarrassing confrontation.

Consequently,the veil became politicized. Not to wear the veil became associated with identifying with the West and the abusive and brutal policies of the Pahlavi regime. This partially explaines how later the adoption of the veil became a symbolic protest against the Shah. For further discussion on politicization of the veil in Iran, see Sanasarian, 1982,P. 137-139.

5. It is interesting and revealing to note that the present harsh and aggressive punishment and surveilance over women who fail to observe Islamic Hejab are usually carried out by women from verv same traditional groups who call themselves "*Hezbollahee* women" (i.e., "Partisans of God")or "Zeinab's Sisters". Their deeply rooted hostility toward unveiled women can be explained in part, by their previous socio-psychological experiences under the Shah.

6. For further elaboration, see Farah Azari, Women of Iran: The conflict with fundamentalist Islam, 1983, P. 66.

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